

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05

AID-05 PC-01 IO-10 /100 W
----- 047730

R 251730Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7300

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGDOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 892

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PGOV, DM

SUBJ: STATUS REPORT ON GENERAL STRIKE AGAINST PRESIDENT
KEREKOU

REF A. COTONOU 882 B. COTONOU 872 C. COTONOU 862

SUMMARY: GENERAL STRIKE AGAINST KEREKOU CONTINUES, BUT IT MAY
HAVE LOST ABIT OF MOMENTUM AS SECURITY FORCES ARE MONITORING
ATTENDANCE AND TAKING NAMES OF MISSING PERSONNEL. MOST
WORKERS ON DUTY IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR ARE WORKING AT SNAIL'S
PACE. PUBLIC PROTEST CONTINUES TO FOCUS ON KEREKOU AS WELL
AS THE PRESENCE OF GUINEANS IN HIS BODYGUARD AND ALLEGEDLY ALSO
AMONG TROOPS BEING USED TO SUPPRESS PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS.
REPORTEDLY PHYSICIAN WHO EXAMINED AIKPE'S BODY IN HOSPITAL
FOUND SHREDS OF UNIFORM MATERIAL IN HIS WOUNDS, THUS FURTHER
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DISPUTING KEREKOU'S VERSION THAT AIKPE WAS UNDRESSED IN BED

WITH KEREKOU'S WIFE WHEN SHOT DEAD. SOME GOVT MINISTERS REPORTEDLY HAVE ATTEMPTED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO RESIGN. PROMINENT POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. END SUMMARY

1. GENERAL STRIKE IN COTONOU AND PORTO-NOVO CONTINUED TODAY BUT IT DID NOT APPEAR TO GAIN ANY MOMENTUM. IF ANYTHING IT MAY HAVE EBBED A BIT. WITH SECURITY FORCES MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND TAKING NAMES OF ABSENTEES, MOST PERSONNEL SEEM TO BE PRESENT IN MINISTRIES AND PORT BUT ARE WORKING AT SNAIL'S PACE. MOST PRIVATE BUSINESSES ARE OPERATING AS NORMAL. SOME OF THEM OPENED IN FACE OF THREATS TO BURN DOWN PREMISES. AIRPORT REMAINS CLOSED DUE TO ABSENCE OF CUSTOMS AND CONTROL TOWER PERSONNEL; HOWEVER, WE UNDERSTAND MIN OF TRANS-PORT IS ON THE SPOT AND HAS ORDERED SUCH PERSONNEL AS ARE THERE TO "BRING IN" PANAM'S WEEKLY WESTWARD FLIGHT TO NY THIS EVENING "OR ELSE". MAIN SECTORS OF GENERAL SUPPORT FOR STRIKE APPEAR TO BE SCHOOL TEACHERS, CUSTOMS AND PUBLIC HEALTH PERSONNEL (HOSPITALS, DISPENSARIES). BUT THERE ARE POCKETS OF FIERCE RESISTANCE IN SECTORS THAT OTHERWISE APPEAR TO BE FUNCTIONING (E.G. ENGINEERS IN PUBLIC WORKS MINISTRY WHO REPORTEDLY HAVE SIGNED STATEMENT THAT THEY WILL NOT RETURN TO WORK UNTIL KEREKOU IS OUSTED AND BROUGHT TO TRAIL). IT IS SAID THAT MANY OF THOSE WHO HAVE RETURNED TO WORK WOULD PREFER TO REAMIN AWAY BUT ARE AFRAID OF REPRISALS. PRIMARY SCHOOLS ARE NEVER OPEN ON WEDNESDAYS; THEREFORE IT WILL NOT BE CLEAR UNTIL TOMORROW WHETHER THE GOVT HAS BROKEN TEACHERS' STRIKE. KEREKOU CONVOKED THE LEADERS OF TEACHERS' UNION, BUT WE BELIEVE THEY FAILED TO TURN UP.

2. TODAY'S GOVT NEWSPAPER DAHO-EXPRESS FEATURES POLITICAL XEREAN DECLARATION SIGNED BY KEREKOU DENOUNCING SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS AT HOME AND ABROAD WHO ARE TRYING TO "PUT OUR PEOPLE UNDER THE FOREIGN YOKE AGAIN". IT CRITICIZES "SO-CALLED TRADE UNIONISTS" FOR SPREADING RUMORS AMONG WORKERS THAT GUINEAN SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN USED TO MAINTAIN ORDER. BUT IT DOES NOT DENY THE RUMORS.

3. IN FACT THE PRESENCE OF GUINEAN MILITARY PERSONNEL IS A CONFIDENTIAL

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POPULAR ISSUE AT PRESENT. SOME GUINEANS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN SERVING IN THE PRESIDENTIAL BODYGUARD FOR SOME MONTHS. THERE IS A REPORT THAT ABOUT 100 GUINEAN TROOPS WERE BROUGHT IN BY AIR AROUND 0200 YESTERDAY MORNING, JUNE 24. AN AMERICAN EMPLOYEE NOTICED TWO AIR GUINEAN PROP OR TURBOPROP AIRCRAFT ON RAMP JUNE 21.

4. A FRENCH SOURCE REPORTS THAT FRENCH PHYSICIAN WHO EXAM-

INED AIKPE'S BODY IN HOSPITAL FOUND SHREDS OF UNIFORM CLOTH
IN SOME OF HIS 32 BULLET WOUNDS. IF THIS REPORT IS TRUE,
IT FURTHER DISPROVES KEREKOU'S STORY THAT AIKPE WAS UN-
DRESSED IN BED WITH KEREKOU'S WIFE WHEN HE WAS SHOT DEAD.

5. A FRENCH BUSINESSMAN WHO HAS LIVED HERE ALL HIS LIFE AND
HAS MANY DAHOMEAN FRIENDS IN KEY PLACES INFORMS US THAT A
NUMBER OF GOVT MINISTERS TRIED TO RESIGN DURING THE COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS MEETING ON JUNE 23. KEREKOU REFUSED TO ACCEPT THEIR
RESIGNATIONS AND HE ORDERED THEM TO "STAY IN THE PALACE". NOT
CLEAR WHETHER THIS MEANT THEY ARE BEING HELD OR NOT. SAME
SOURCE SAID THAT ABOUT 15 POLITICAL PRISONERS INCLUDING THE
EX-PRESIDENTS, AS WELL AS ASSOGBA AND OTHERS CONDEMNED BY THE
KANGAGROO TRIBUNAL IN MARCH HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE PRES-
IDENTIAL PALACE. SOURCE SPECULATED THAT THEY MIGHT BE
EXECUTED OR USED AS PAWNS IN CASE AN ASSAULT AGAINST THE
PALACE IS LAUNCHED. THERE ARE VARIOUS REPORTS THAT THE PALACE
IS BRISTLING WITH MACHINE GUNS.
ENGLE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, ASSASSINATION, GENERAL STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COTONO00892
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750221-0558
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750614/aaaaampsp.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 COTONOU 882, 75 COTONOU 872, 75 COTONOU 862
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <28 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATUS REPORT ON GENERAL STRIKE AGAINST PRESIDENT KEREKOU
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, DM, (KEREKOU, MATHIEU)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006